Secrecy and Deceit Mar Nixon Record

THE PRESIDENT has been campaigning for re-election since last summer when, against his instinct, he instituted wage and price controls. It was a loose noose, but a noose withal. The 10 percent impost on imports followed, and the next link was to devalue the dollar.

With ever-increasing rapidity, the President began to wind down the war in Southeaset Asia, this fulfilling a solemn campaign promise. The secret visit of Henry Kissinger to Peking must be regarded as a coup de main, even though the reactionary wing of the Democratic Party views it as a betrayal of Taiwan and that Oriental leech, Chiang Kai-shek.

Jim Bishop

The proposed match of diplomatic Ping-Pong in Peking has led to a series of minor summit meetings from the Azores to Key Biscayne and San Clemente.

If Mr. Nixon can be faulted — and he can — it is in the use of secrecy and deceit throughout his administration. No naive student of politics dares to believe that Mr. Rogers is the secretary of state, or that Mr. Laird is the secretary of defense. The country is run, department by department, from the White House.

On those occasions when the President decides to take the country into his confidence, his voice is modulated and calming, but his hands tremble and diamonds of perspiration shimmer on his upper lip. In almost all cases, he uses these events to go over the head of the daily press to address the people on television.

The newspapers have been bluntly snubbed. Many of them maintain high-salaried workers in the West Wing of the White House. Mr. Nixon has no faith in the writers, and this dates back to 1962, when he stomped the hall of a California hotel after he lost the gubernatorial race to Edmund G. (Pat) Brown shouting: "You won't have Nixon to kick around any more."

Whatever the trauma, Nixon never forgave the reporters and, since he won election in 1968, he has made them pay and pay and pay. The more secretive he became, the harder they tried to pry. This led to the publication of the "Pentagon Papers" and the royal roundelay of court action between the government and "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post."

It is important to Nixon's campaign strategy that he come home from Peking with a detente between 700,000,000 people and 200,000,000. It is a delicate matter, and must be achieved without alienating Moscow or Japan. One thing few recognize in Mr. Nixon is that he is most firm in what he is willing to grant, and what he wants in return for what he grants.

In a last minute effort to be positive, he seems to me to move slightly left. He has been hurt by the knowledge that he is the only President to have fostered a combination depression and inflation, an economic contradiction in terms. But, sword in hand, he backs up the marble staircase of the White House in the manner of Douglas Fairbanks, fighting all the dragons at the same time.

Unlike Herbert Hoover, Mr. Nixon can win. If so, he will try to do it with one arm behind his back. Once more, the reporters distrust him as he distrusts them — but many of the publishers are taking a second appraising glance at Nixon.